

Declaration of Zoya Jenkins

Zoya Jenkins declares, under penalty of perjury and pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746:

1. My name is Zoya Jenkins.
2. I am 38 years old and live in Bethel, Alaska. I am an Alaska native.
3. I live with my husband and two daughters. One of my daughters is 16 years old and the other is 3 years old.
4. My family moved to Anchorage in June 2023, and just moved back to Bethel on January 28, 2024. In Anchorage, I worked for Cricket Wireless Revolution, but upon returning to Bethel, my husband and I were both looking for work.
5. I now work for the gas station and make about \$2520/month before taxes. My husband stays home and takes care of our 3 year old.
6. I was due to recertify my SNAP application in late September 2023.
7. After the delays we faced last year, I wanted to ensure I submitted my recertification well before the due date, and so submitted my recertification on or around August 28, 2023, by fax and email.
8. I did not receive any updates about my application in September or October, nor did I receive any written notice stating that the evaluation of my recertification would be delayed, or any written notice stating that I had the right to a hearing to challenge any delay in the evaluation of my recertification.
9. On or around October 31, 2023, as I had not received a decision about my benefits, I contacted Alaska Legal Services Corporation. ALSC submitted a fair hearing request on my behalf on October 31, 2023.

10. On or around November 8, 2023, I received a denial notice. The reasons stated were that I did not complete an interview and I was over income.

11. I never received a notice about my interview.

12. ALSC helped me submit another fair hearing request on November 16, 2023.

13. On or around November 28, 2023, DPA called to request that I send updated information about my income. I submitted the requested information on November 30, 2023.


14. In early January 2024, I received notice dated December 22, 2023, I finally received my benefits, back dated to October 2023.

15. In the months where I did not have SNAP, I had to forgo paying my bills in order to buy food. For example, I was not able to pay my phone bill on three separate occasions. Each time, I had an additional \$17 late fee added to my account, and during that time I was not able to make outgoing calls or send outgoing texts.

16. Without SNAP, my family relied on food banks in Anchorage including one at St. Francis House Food Pantry and the Salvation Army. With SNAP, I purchase non-processed food, but at the food bank, only heavily processed food is available. I am an Alaska native and grew up eating non-processed food. Whenever I have to eat the food bank food, my body reacts poorly to the chemicals. I feel bloated and my blood pressure goes up, I was constipated and it would hurt after I eat.

17. I believe that without the help of Alaska Legal Services, I would still be waiting for my benefits.

Dated: April 17, 2024
Bethel, Alaska

DocuSigned by:

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Zoya Jenkins